



New USDA rule changes official identification requirements for interstate livestock movement

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MADISON – A new USDA rule minimally changes official identification (ID) requirements for animals shipping interstate but still improves animal disease traceability, according to animal health officials at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP).

“The new rule generally requires livestock moving interstate to be officially identified and have a certification of veterinary inspection, which is consistent with the existing regulations in Wisconsin. These records give us the ability to trace an animal to a specific location in the event of a disease outbreak,” said Dr. Paul McGraw, DATCP’s Assistant State Veterinarian.

The primary change for Wisconsin livestock shippers is that some forms of ID that were previously considered acceptable for cattle are no longer valid after the rule takes effect on March 11. After that date, breed registration tattoos and registration numbers will no longer be considered official for cattle. American ID, 982 series tags, will also no longer be valid in two years.

“Breed registration tattoos and registration numbers will still be official ID for sheep, goats and other species, but not for cattle,” McGraw said.

When moving livestock interstate, the federal rule requires that:

- All sexually intact dairy cattle must be officially identified
- All rodeo, exhibition or event cattle (including steers) must be officially identified
- Sexually intact beef cattle younger than 18 months of age do not require official ID
- A backtag will still work as ID and a CVI is not required for animals going direct to slaughter

“Even though the federal rule sets an age limit of 18 months for sexually intact beef cattle, they will still need official ID to move into Wisconsin, in order to comply with existing state regulations,” McGraw said.

Acceptable ID forms, as defined in the rule, are:

- U.S. origin 15 digit eartags starting with 840
- National Uniform Eartag System (NUES) tags (Brite tags starting with state code, nine digit alphanumeric tag, an example of which is the orange brucellosis calfhood vaccination tags)
- Brands are acceptable ***only if the state of origin and the state of destination approve and have an agreement***, but Wisconsin has no agreements in place and no current plans to develop any brand or commuter herd agreements
- Other official ID approved by the USDA

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